

Silicon Times Report

"The Original Independent Online Magazine"
(Since 1987)

September 19, 1997

No.1337

Silicon Times Report International Magazine
Post Office Box 6672
Jacksonville, Florida 32205-6155

R.F. Mariano, Editor
STR Publishing, Inc.
Voice: 1-904-292-9222 10am-5pm EST
FAX: 904-268-2237 24hrs
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The Publisher, Staff & Editors

1987-1997

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Results: 09/13/97: three of six numbers with 2 three # matches

>From the Editor's Desk...

I can only guess about how many of you remember the editorial (5/12/95) about the grossly negligent manner in which CompuServe was being operated by its top management. Here we are today looking at Comouserve being "absorbed" like so much food for a much larger Giant. A Giant (AOL) that did indeed take advantage of the times and paid careful attention to the Internet, the online service market and the premise of being an ISP with the most to offer.

One cannot help but wonder why these very same clods, now wish to threaten many of their current and past contract holders with lawsuits of an endless description and variety for having gone to Online Services that do indeed have a vision of the future and are aggressively pursuing that

vision. Month after month for the last TWO years. the forums on CIS have gone downhill with many simply changing hands to far less capable hands and those forums easily reflect such with their poor content and interaction with the subs.

First on the list of serious BLUNDERS was the WOW Disaster. what a joke that thing was. A monstrous bloated pig that offered little or nothing except a highly structured, can you say. dictated environment? WOW easily sped toward FAILURE.. Then came the internal corporate jousts with outsiders playing politics and insiders "getting even".. meanwhile.. the service itself was being seriously neglected.

CIS and its current spate of Whigs should think very carefully about their lawsuit saber rattling as this is a VERY SMALL world. Sooner or later, these law suit happy petunias will have to deal the very same people they are so busy threatening at this time. When that time comes and come it will. the flip side of the coin will bring sweet, sweet music. These Whigs have no-one to blame for the implosion of CIS. They were ever so busy re-directing CIS' income to reflect wonderful things for the Stockholders that they neglected to keep CIS technologically up to date.

With that thought in mind, once AOL and its mentor discover just how backward CIS is, technologically speaking, I'll calmly and confidently predict that CIS will be a mere shadow of itself if not gone entirely by this time next year. Well done guys. Duh!

Ps; I was going to say something about J. Berst's garbage column where he rants and raves on about Win98 but in the interests of sanity and kindness. he's best ignored. What a wasteful "outberst!" Must be the "berst" he can do.

Of Special Note:

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STReport is now ready to offer much more in the way of serving the Networks, Online Services and Internet's vast, fast growing site list and userbase. We now have our very own WEB/FTP Site, do stop by and have a look see. Since We've received numerous requests to receive STReport from a wide variety of Internet addressees, we were compelled to put together an Internet distribution mailing list for those who wished to receive STReport on a regular basis, the file is ZIPPED, then UUENCODED. Unfortunately, we've also received a number of opinions that the UUENCODING was a real pain to deal with. You'll be pleased to know you are able to download STReport directly from our very own FTP SERVER or WEB Site. While there, be sure to join our STR AutoMailer list which allows a choice of either ASCII or Acrobat PDF.

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Please submit ALL letters, rebuttals, articles, reviews, etc., via E-Mail
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Internet	rmariano@streport.com
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LATE BREAKING INDUSTRY-WIDE NEWS

Weekly Happenings in the Computer World

Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

AMD, IBM Strike a Deal

IBM has embraced Advanced Micro Devices Inc.'s latest microprocessor -- the K6 -- for use in some of its Aptiva computers, encouraging the Sunnyvale, California, chipmaker to hope other PC makers will follow suit.

The Associated Press notes that while Acer, Fujitsu and Digital have agreed to use the K6, introduced in May, none is as big as IBM.

AMD spokesman David Frink told the wire service, "Having IBM as a customer validates the acceptance of the K6 processor, and it certainly will be helpful as we approach other companies worldwide." AP notes IBM will keep using Pentiums in most of its PCs and wouldn't say how many K6 chips it would buy. Jim Firestone, head of IBM's consumer division, said the company believes AMD will help it expand its product line.

The wire service says the decision also likely will add ammunition to the price war in the chip industry. While K6 chips are about 25 percent less expensive than comparable Pentium processors, Intel has countered with steep price cuts. AMD responded with reductions of its own.

Apple Offers Japanese Mac OS 8

A Japanese version of Apple Computer Inc.'s new operating system Mac OS 8 for the Macintosh will be released Sept. 26. Reporting from Tokyo, the Reuter News Service Apple Japan Inc. aims to sell 800,000 units of the Mac OS 8 in Japan by the end of December. Apple Japan President Eiko Harada told a news conference today Apple has sold 1.2 million units of Mac OS 8 in the United States since it was unveiled there on July 22. The new software will incorporate Netscape Communications Corp.'s Netscape Navigator 3.01 and Microsoft Corp.'s Microsoft Internet Explorer 3.01. The Japanese version of Mac OS 8 is due to be upgraded next year, but details

have not yet been decided, an Apple Japan told the wire service.

Apple Buys Power Computing

Apple Computer Inc. has confirmed that it will buy the core assets of Macintosh clone maker Power Computing Corp. in a deal valued at \$100 million in Apple common stock. Apple will acquire the right to retain key employees with expertise in direct marketing, distribution, and engineering; Power Computing's customer database; and the license to distribute the Mac OS operating system. "Power Computing has pioneered direct marketing and sales in the Macintosh market, successfully building a \$400 million business," says Steve Jobs, an Apple board member and de facto leader. "We look forward to learning from their experience, and welcoming their customers back into the Apple family."

"Power Computing is grateful for the tremendous support and encouragement we have received from the entire Macintosh community," says Stephen Kahng, Power Computing's founder and CEO. "We believe that in our small way, we have helped to make the Macintosh stronger, and that the spirit of Power will live on." Power Computing will retain its name and continue to sell Mac OS compatible computers through Dec. 31, 1997. Apple will provide ongoing Mac OS support to Power Computing customers and Power Computing will continue to provide hardware and warranty service to its customers.

Apple Vice President Resigns

Guerrino De Luca, Apple Computer Inc.'s executive vice president of marketing since February, has resigned.

Reporting from Apple's Cupertino, Calif., headquarters, the Reuter News Service says no successor was immediately named. In a statement, De Luca said, "This is a personal decision which does not reflect my assessment of the company's prospects. We are seeing a lot of changes at Apple, and I'm confident that Apple will shine again."

MacWorld Expo Moving to New York

Organizers of Apple Computer Inc.'s annual MacWorld Expo say the show is leaving Boston for "bigger and better opportunities" in New York City, bringing millions of dollars in tourist money with it. Reporting from Boston, United Press International quotes the organizers as saying the fact it had to hold the four-day event at two different locations prompted it to relocate to the Javits Center in Manhattan.

Motorola Exits Mac Clone Business

Motorola Inc. plans to discontinue its Mac OS-compatible computer business in response to Apple's recent decision to limit the introduction of its new technology and phase out future licensing. Motorola says it had been negotiating with Apple since February and had reached essential agreement on new licensing terms in June. "But given Apple's recent decision to phase out its support for long term licensing, the agreement could not be implemented," notes a Motorola statement.

"This announcement brings to an end our effort to reach agreement with Apple on terms that would have supported our continued Mac OS investments," says Joe Guglielmi, general manager of Motorola's computer group. "Now that we have arrived at this juncture we will concentrate our resources on emerging opportunities in the market and on strengthening our profitable

embedded and technical systems business, where we remain market leaders." Motorola's OS-compatible StarMax systems will be available for sale until the end of the year.

Hitachi Sells Best Buy Deal

Hitachi PC Corp. says it has reached a deal to market its VisionBook Plus notebook PC line through Best Buy stores. Under the agreement, Minneapolis-based Best Buy will distribute the systems to over 280 locations nationwide, effective immediately. Estimated street prices for the notebooks range from \$1,799 to \$3,199.

"Best Buy is one of the strongest merchandisers in the consumer electronics market for mobile computing products. This addition further demonstrates Hitachi's continuous growth in the retail channel," says Fred Angelopoulos, senior vice president of sales, service and support for Hitachi PC Corp., which is based in San Jose, California. "With our 'best of class' philosophy, we are selective in choosing partners in the retail market who have a strong commitment to sell portable computer products. We've found that Best Buy effectively reaches customers who prefer to buy these products at consumer electronics stores." The Hitachi PC Corp. Web site can be found at <http://www.HitachiPC.com>.

Novell Chief Denies Merger Rumors

Responding to rumors of a possible merger with IBM Corp., Novell Inc. Chairman and CEO Eric Schmidt has flatly stated that the networking company "is not for sale." "First of all, the company is not for sale," Schmidt told reporters at the Java Internet Business Expo in New York, adding, "I am not allowed to comment on any of these kinds of rumors." Novell, which has seen sales of its flagship NetWare client-server network software hammered by the rapid rise of intranets, has been the subject of intense speculation over the past several weeks.

Borland Banks on Java

Remember Borland International Inc.? The software publishing wonder of the 1980s is banking on demand for programs written in the Java computer language to fuel a come-back. Borland, still struggling after three years, is rolling out JBuilder, a program that helps programmers write other software in Java, the language that handles much of the communication between computers operating in corporate networks or on the Internet.

Borland President/CEO Del Yocam told Kourosh Karimkhany of the Reuter News Service, "JBuilder is the first industrial-strength Java development tool. It absolutely represents new revenue for the company."

Karimkhany says the new product also will help the Scotts Valley, California, firm expand sales among corporate accounts, where customers spend thousands of dollars. Until now, notes Reuters, much of Borland's revenue has come from retail sales to individual programmers, who spend about \$150 for most types of programming tools. Borland, once the third-largest software vendor, has seen its revenue shrink in the past three years, but Yocam says the firm is poised to return to profitability. The company has slashed expenses with layoffs earlier this year, and focused on its core programming tools business.

Sun Asked to Cede Java Control

A group of computer industry giants is asking Sun Microsystems Inc. to transfer control of its Java language to an international standards-setting

organization. In an open letter to Sun executives, Intel Corp., Microsoft Corp., Digital Equipment Corp. and Compaq Computer Corp. state they are concerned that Sun has too much control over a language that is quickly becoming one of the foundations of the Internet.

"We think Java is important for industry and our customers," Tom Waldrop, an Intel spokesman told the Reuter news service. "To us it's important for the development of the Internet, that Java remain an open standard." "The companies said Sun, the inventor of Java, should turn over ownership of the language to the International Standards Organization, a forum that regulates technical standards and measures," notes Reuters. The companies also said the Java name should be free to all interested parties.

HP and Kodak Set New Printer Paper

Hewlett-Packard Co. and Eastman Kodak Co. have co-developed a new glossy ink-jet photo paper that's designed to deliver photo-quality prints. HP Deluxe Photo Paper is compatible with HP's new DeskJet 720C and DeskJet 890C printers.

"This co-developed ink-jet photo-grade paper, together with KODAK Image Enhancement technology, enables families and businesses to quickly and easily create superb, quality photographic images from HP ink-jet printers," says Cliff Trott, chief marketing officer and vice president of Kodak's digital and applied imaging division. HP Deluxe Photo Paper, scheduled to become available in October, will sell for \$14.99 in a 20-sheet pack.

Micron Adopts New Web Technology

Lucent Technologies reports that Micron Electronics has become the first commercial customer to use Lucent's Internet Call Center, which allows users to browse a Web page and talk to a sales agent over a single analog phone line. Lucent's Internet Call Center is designed to make it easy for customers to buy, order and configure PC systems from Micron over the Internet. Using a voice-enabled browser, such as Netscape Navigator or Microsoft Internet Explorer, Micron customers simply click a button to speak with a sales agent while browsing Micron's Web site (<http://www.micronpc.com>).

"By adding Lucent's Internet Call Center to our sales operation, we are providing our customers superior service, giving them direct access into our call center from our Web site," says Jim Jacobson, director of telecommunication at Micron Electronics. "Customers can browse our Web site for information about the PC they want to buy and then talk to agents if they have questions about their purchase." Lucent Technologies has also installed the Internet Call Center at Lucent Direct, an online catalog for customers interested in buying Lucent products. Customers can access Lucent Direct at <http://www.lucentdirect.com>.

Iomega Unveils Enhanced Zip Drive

Iomega Corp. plans to introduce a ZipPlus version of its 100MB Zip drive. The Roy, Utah, company reports that the \$199.95 product will include a 40 percent performance boost, an AutoDetect feature that allows the drive to be used with either a SCSI or parallel interface, a smaller universal power supply and an on/off switch. The drive will also be bundled with multimedia software, including full versions of Adobe PhotoDeluxe, DataViz's Web Buddy and Digital Arts & Sciences' Image AXS. "Iomega conducted extensive focus studies with our customers to determine how we could best match their

needs," said Neil Snyder, general manager of Iomega's Zip aftermarket business. "ZipPlus has been extremely well received by our distributors and retailers who have previewed the product. ZipPlus is scheduled to ship this fall. The original Zip drive will continue to be available for \$149.95. Iomega's Web site is located at <http://www.iomega.com>.

Netscape to Offer Java Navigator

A "100 percent pure Java" version of Netscape Navigator client software is being promised by next year as part of a new deal between Netscape Communications Corp. and Sun Microsystems Inc. to integrate Sun's HotJava technology. The Reuter News Service says the software will run on Sun's products, including the JavaStation, as well as any platform with a Java Virtual Machine. "In addition," says Reuters, "Sun's JavaSoft division has agreed to include Netscape's HTML rendering component, JavaBean, in conjunction with the Java development kit, making Netscape's technology the standard for HTML rendering for Java programming language applications. Sun also plans to ship the Java version of Netscape's browser as the standard browser technology with Sun's products."

Apple Changes Newton Strategy

Apple Computer Inc. reportedly has changed its mind on its Newton hand-held unit. Instead of spinning off the division, as it announced three months ago, the firm is said to be developing a general-purpose version of its eMate portable now sold only to schools. The New York Times reports the reversal is the latest major change made by Apple co-founder Steve Jobs since he became de facto head of the company last month. Business writer Catalina Ortiz of The Associated Press notes Apple has produced the Newton hand-held, pen-based computer for the past four years and "despite technological improvements, the company said in May it would turn the Newton division into an independent subsidiary."

However, Apple now has changed that strategy, says the Times, citing unidentified sources close to the company. Apple now plans to use the Newton software to develop versions of the eMate for uses beyond education. Tim Bajarin, president of Creative Strategies Research International in San Jose, isn't surprised. "I know they've been very pleased with the response to eMate," he told Ortiz. "They would like and have been playing with the idea of ... an eMate line."

AP notes Apple earlier this year introduced the \$700 eMate, which uses Newton software but resembles a small notebook PC. It is built into a translucent green plastic "clamshell" that when opens reveals the screen and keyboard.

Sharp Unveils High-End Notebook

Sharp Electronics Corp. has introduced a top-of-the-line notebook computer equipped with a 233MHz Intel Pentium MMX processor. The new PC-9820T notebook also offers a 13.3-inch active matrix LCD, a Universal Serial Bus interface and a 56.6Kbps modem. Additionally, two multifunction bays allow for the interchange of a floppy disk drive, CD-ROM drive, a battery pack or an wall power adapter. "In our continued commitment to rapidly deliver the latest in portable computing innovations, Sharp specifically designed the PC-9820T to combine both the most recent PC advances such as Intel's 233MHz processor with MMX technology, and Sharp's larger and brighter LCD," says David Mills, associate director of Sharp's corporate sales division. "The result is a technologically advanced and superior performing notebook that is capable of satisfying the needs of any

corporate executives, whether on the road or at their desks."

Toshiba Has Slimline DVD-ROM Drive

Toshiba America Information Systems reports it is set to begin shipping the first slimline DVD-ROM drive designed for integration into notebook PCs. The Irvine, California, company notes that the SD-C2002 is compatible with all current DVD media and CD-ROM media, including CD-R. It offers a data transfer rate of 2.7K bps for DVD and 2.4K bps for CD-ROM. Volume production is slated to begin later this month. Toshiba will sell the drive to notebook PC manufacturers at prices starting at \$250.

"By bringing DVD-ROM in a slimline form factor to notebook computer manufacturers, we are enabling our customers to take mobile computing to a new level," says Maciek Brzeski director of TAIS's optical business unit. "The SD-C2002 will be the drive of choice for high-end notebook computer manufacturers designing in DVD-ROM for their Winter 97 and Spring 98 lines."

Apple Upgrades Power Mac 6500

Apple Computer Inc.'s Power Macintosh 6500 models are now available with new speed enhancements.

The systems, which include faster internal modems and CD- ROMs, as well as larger hard drives in most models, are also the first Apple desktop systems to ship with the recently introduced Mac OS 8 system software.

Designed for the family and small office/home office markets, the new Power Macintosh 6500/300 Home Edition, 6500/275 Home Edition and 6500/275 Small Business Edition models feature a 6GB internal hard drive, a built-in 24x-speed CD-ROM drive, a 56kbps modem and an internal 100MB Zip drive. The Power Macintosh 6500/250 Home Edition features a 4GB internal hard drive and no Zip drive.

"The new Power Macintosh 6500 systems incorporate numerous improvements based on the feedback we received from our customers," says Ketil Henriksen, an Apple product manager. "We have equipped the systems with new features we feel will provide our customers with the simplicity, yet power they expect from a Power Macintosh." The enhanced Power Macintosh 6500 models are scheduled to ship during September, except for the 6500/300, which is scheduled to ship in October. Prices range from \$2,000 to \$3,000.

Logitech Readies Flexible Scanner

Logitech is preparing to release FreeScan, a \$299 scanner that's capable of handling multiple-page documents, bound materials, photos, business cards and a wide variety of large and small items, ranging from engineering drawings to postage stamps. FreeScan users feed multiple-page documents through the unit's rear-mounted automatic document feeder and single pages through either a front-feed slot or the document feeder. To scan bound materials, FreeScan's motorized scanner head detaches to "travel" along pages at a controlled speed.

"We believe customers are looking for the freedom to scan almost anything and be assured of great results, yet they're faced with difficult tradeoffs in finding a scanner well-suited to their needs," says Fred Swan, Logitech's senior product manager for scanners. "With FreeScan, we're offering options, not forcing compromises. That's why we're calling the category 'compact multipurpose,' as opposed to 'sheetfed,' 'flatbed' or 'photo' scanner, each of which implies certain limitations."

FreeScan features a 600 by 600 dots per inch optical resolution (4,800 by 4,800 dots interpolated) and a 30-bit color depth. The unit is scheduled to ship in late September. Logitech's Web site is located at <http://www.logitech.com>.

Windows 98 Release Delayed

Release of the latest Windows upgrade is being postponed by Microsoft Corp. to allow users of its two earlier operating systems to switch at the same time. Associated Press writer Rory Marshall quotes Microsoft officials as saying the delay was unrelated to any bugs with Windows 98 and that the publisher plans to release the software sometime between April and June instead of by the end of March, as originally planned. The company said it needs more time to test upgrades for Windows 95 and its predecessor, Windows 3.1, which is still used by millions of people. Marshall notes Microsoft had planned to sell only an upgrade for Windows 95 first, then one for 3.1 later.

But Windows product manager Phil Holden said releasing the product in two stages would have caused confusion among software testers and customers. AP says Windows 98, like Windows 95, is being designed to run programs written for earlier versions of the operating software, which runs the basic functions of a computer, adding, "The new version of Windows won't be the technological leap that marked the introduction of Windows 95 two years ago. But it will combine Microsoft's Internet Explorer browser into the general operation of the computer, while being more reliable and simpler to operate." Microsoft estimates about 60 million computers users still rely on Windows 3.1, while 100 million use Windows 95 or Windows NT, a corporate version of the software.

Microsoft WebTV to Face Challenge

Microsoft Corp.'s WebTV venture is about to be challenged by a firm supported by a group of cable, communications and financial industry companies. According to the New York Times, Bensalem, Pennsylvania-based start-up Worldgate Communications Inc. is building a TV-based Web browsing system

that would be faster, cheaper and less demanding of the user than Microsoft's technology. The company is backed by Scientific-Atlanta, Citicorp, Motorola and a number of other large firms. The newspaper notes that within a few weeks, Worldgate will begin offering Internet service through a set-top cable converter box, the subscriber's TV and a remote control for \$12 or less per month. The service would offer data speeds four times faster than the fastest modem connections over conventional phone lines, the paper adds. Microsoft's Web TV requires consumers to buy a special \$200 set-top device and pay a \$20 monthly fee.

Portable Computer Market Changes

The rapid expansion of the U.S. portable computer market has been driven by increased use of the machines as primary computers, but what buyers require and value from vendors may be changing, finds a new study by International Data Corp. The study notes that while current technology remains important, other issues are coming to the forefront -- system availability, product reliability, vendor reputation, and warranty and service -- signaling a deemphasis on product specifications as the primary criteria driving future portable PC purchases. On the competitive front, IDC's report shows that the traditional market leaders are receiving a strong challenge from up and coming vendors like Dell Computer Corp.

"It is quite clear the recent problems of product availability and product reliability have impacted the purchasing decision process for many portable computer buyers," says Randy Giusto, director of mobile technology research. "The portable PC market is mature and largely commoditized so product features are no longer the key differentiators they once were. For many, the current set of technology features are sufficient, and vendor marketing skills must move to a higher level, as the new set of purchase criteria center on issues such as network manageability, cost of ownership, ease of doing business and brand strength." The study finds that Dell has become a formidable force among top-tier vendors, while Toshiba is the "best of breed" among all vendors. IDC's Web site (<http://www.idc.com>) contains additional company information and recent news releases and offers full-text searching of recent research.

Sony Offers New Rewritable Discs

A new standard for large-capacity, rewritable data storage discs for computers and digital video disc players has been announced by Japan's Sony Corp. and five other companies. Reporting from Tokyo, the Reuter News Service says the new disc, called Phase-Change Rewritables, will be supported by Hewlett-Packard Co., Philips Electronics NV, Mitsubishi Chemical Corp., Ricoh Co. and Yamaha Corp. The disk will not be compatible with DVD-RAMs, a similar rewritable disc technology announced earlier this year by a group of 10 major electronic equipment makers, including Sony and Philips. DVD-RAMs are due to hit the market at the end of this year, Reuters notes. The wire service quotes Sony officials as saying the disc will be able to store 3.0 gigabytes of information on a single side, compared with DVD-RAM's 2.6 gigabytes. Look for Sony to put the new disc on the market in the first half of next year, but the launch date will vary among the six firms.

Wearable Computer Ships

Xybernaut Corp. has begun shipping its newest wearable computer. The Xybernaut 133P, designed for "hands-free" use in a variety of industrial applications, is the first wearable computer to ship with the new 32-bit PCMCIA cardbus technology. The system comes standard with a 133MHz Pentium processor, 32MB of EDO RAM, a 1.4 GB hard drive, a full set of standard ports, a built-in pointing device and an infra-red port. Also provided are an integrated speech recognition software and two Type II or one Type III PCMCIA cardbus slots.

The computer is powered by lithium-ion batteries that deliver 4 to 8 hours of continuous service. A miniature headmounted VGA display presents information as if it were being viewed on a 15-inch monitor from 2 feet away. "With the establishment of factory production line capabilities, and now shipment of the 133P, Xybernaut is well on its way to providing its customers with a range of wearable computing products to meet a variety of requirements," says Edward G. Newman, president and CEO of Fairfax, Virginia-based Xybernaut.

More Supercomputer Rules Urged

Two congressmen say U.S. controls over export of supercomputers are inadequate for national security purposes, urging the Clinton administration to revise them. Rep. Floyd Spence (R-South Carolina), chairman of the House National Security Committee and Rep. Ronald Dellums (D-California), the ranking Democrat, have released a report reaching that conclusion by a bipartisan panel of nongovernment experts, reports The

Associated Press. Spence said, "This report confirms my belief that the administration's supercomputer policy fails to properly account for America's national security interest. I hope this report will help us convince the administration to reconsider its policy before irreparable damage is done to our national security."

AP notes that in October 1995, the Clinton administration relaxed export controls based on a Stanford University report to the Departments of Defense and Commerce. The congressmen say that as a result, the China and Russia were able to obtain U.S. supercomputers that can assist them in their nuclear and advanced conventional weapons programs. They said Russia has acknowledged its intention to use them to maintain its nuclear weapons stockpile. Spence and Dellums have asked a five-member panel of outside experts to review the Stanford study to assess the implications on U.S. national security of relaxing supercomputer export controls. They said four of the five panel members agreed the study had several shortcomings.

House Action Seen on Encryption

Suddenly, two House committees are poised to approve domestic controls on computer encoding technology for the first time, illustrating how quickly debate over encryption has changed in the past month. Reporter Aaron Pressman of the Reuter News Service observes, "Less than two months ago, opponents of strict U.S. export controls on encryption announced that they had the support of a majority of the House for a bill to eliminate most restrictions. But since then, the Clinton administration stepped up its lobbying campaign, sending the heads of the FBI and the National Security Agency to Capitol Hill to brief lawmakers in classified hearings on the dangers posed by free export of encryption."

- On Tuesday, the House National Security Committee gutted the bill to relax export controls. Pressman notes an amendment to tighten export controls passed on a 45 to one vote, with more than a dozen backers of the original bill voting for the more-stringent restrictions.
- Yesterday, lawmakers planned to offer further amendments in the Select Intelligence Committee and the Commerce Committee which would impose domestic controls on the use of encryption, currently unregulated with the United States.

"The amendments," says Reuters, "would require all encryption manufacturers to include a feature allowing the government to decode any message covertly. The proposals also would require network operators, Internet providers and phone companies to ensure that any encryption services they provide to customers can be cracked by law enforcement agencies." As reported, FBI director Louis Freeh says such legislation is needed to allow law enforcement agencies to continue to tap conversations of criminals and terrorists as encryption spreads. However, the high-tech industry contends the technology to allow eavesdropping would increase the vulnerability and raise the cost of all electronic messages sent by law-abiding citizens and businesses, while criminals would disable the back doors.

Stronger Net Copyright Urged

Music publishers have descended on Congress asking for approval of two international copyright treaties in a bid to stave off what they say is a new breed of cyber-pirates. Appearing yesterday before the Senate Judiciary Committee, the publishers played an illegal, pirated version of Madonna's hit song "Don't cry for me Argentina," which listeners said sounded as good as the real thing.

Citing a proliferation of such perfect digital copies on the Internet, the publishers told the senators the treaties, passed in December by the World Intellectual Property Organization, seek to update copyright laws across the globe in the age of computers and computer networks. Cary Sherman, general counsel for the Recording Industry Association of America, told the committee, "The Internet holds great promise for electronic commerce for music and other forms of entertainment. Unfortunately, the rapid growth of the Internet also means that the peril faced by our industry is of the same magnitude. Our sound recordings are easily copied to a computer hard drive." However, notes the Reuter News Service, the treaties could curb legitimate "fair use" of copyright material, according to some libraries and educational groups.

For instance:

- '• Libraries and others favor legislation to clarify and protect fair use in the digital age. They back a bill by Sen. John Ashcroft (R-Missouri) to clarify language in the treaties and make sure fair use rights are maintained.
- '• Telephone companies and online service providers have told the committee they fear the treaties and implementing legislation proposed by the Clinton administration would leave them legally liable for copyright infringements by any of their millions of customers. They backed legislation to protect them from liability unless the owner of a copyright work notified them of an infringement.

Feds Resist Net Phone Rules

Pleas by small long-distance companies to regulate Internet telephone calls are being resisted by the federal government. At a conference in Washington yesterday on the Net phone technology, Commerce Department Assistant Secretary Larry Irving said, "Washington at this point has no need to regulate." The Associated Press notes the America's Carriers Telecommunications Association, a group of small long-distance companies, is worried that the new communications may cut into profits and has asked:

- '• The Federal Communications Commission to order makers of Internet phone technology to stop selling software that allows people to make such calls.
- '• The government to regulate Internet phone providers like traditional telephone carriers, meaning they would have to pay fees to support affordable telephone service for low-income and rural people and their services would be subject to state and federal regulation.

However, FCC has not yet acted on the petition, filed in March 1996. AP notes some 60 companies now provide Internet phone service, though the business is still in its infancy.

U.N. Seeks Deal in Net Names Flap

United Nations experts say countries seeking a consensus on the issue of expanding Internet addresses want more liberal standards to allow a greater number of firms to settle disputes over domain names. Speaking in Geneva yesterday at the World Intellectual Property Organization, a United Nations agency that deals with copyrights and trademarks, the experts said new guidelines are likely to be issued by the end of the year on registration of corporate domain names on the Internet.

Notes the Reuter News Service, "It is hoped that those guidelines will put

an end to bidding wars over desirable names and in some cases, lawsuits by trademark holders claiming infringement. Efforts to harmonize the system of network addresses, which direct Web surfing and other Internet activity, were discussed at a Geneva meeting among WIPO's member states this week."

Reuters says a bloc of global and national companies and cyberspace bodies are seeking a new system for registering corporate addresses on the Internet, noting that last May, they agreed to set up a dispute settlement mechanism for domain names where WIPO will act as administrator. WIPO director Albert Tramposch told the wire service that participants are seeking a more liberal definition for a dispute settlement system than one in a proposal drafted in January which defined internationally known trademarks as those held in 35 or more countries located in four or more geographical regions, a criteria which many companies were unable to meet.

Said Tramposch, "Participants felt that there was a need for providing greater access to an administrative dispute settlement procedure so that a large number of companies can have their conflicts settled quicker and more efficiently." He said the efforts are aimed at ending confusion over allocation of "top-level domain names" or TLDs -- counterparts of telephone numbers on the rapidly expanding global computer system.

Overseeing the domain name change, a group called the Interim Policy Oversight Committee, of which WIPO is a member, has proposed a new structure for doling out domain names that envisages the creation of new registries for international, rather than country-specific domain names. As noted, the plan also would end a monopoly currently held by the U.S.-based Network Solutions Inc. on so-called "generic" TLDs -- .com, .org, and .net -- by creating seven new addressing categories such as .store for shops and .arts for culture.

Tramposch told Reuters the Interim Policy Oversight Committee is expected to issue new guidelines on domain names by the end of the year and to chose new registrars of international domain names in addition to eight named so far.

Net Threat Worries Commission

A presidential commission says government research funding should be doubled to prevent cascading failures of the nation's power, water, finance and emergency systems that are increasingly connected, especially through the Internet. Associated Press writer Beth Powell says the President's Commission on Critical Infrastructure Protection is reviewing security for eight critical infrastructures: electric power distribution, telecommunication, banking and finance, water, transportation, oil and gas storage and transportation, emergency services and government services.

Retired Air Force Gen. Robert T. Marsh, the commission chairman, told Powell, "These are the life support systems of the nation. They're vital, not only for day-to-day discourse, they're vital to national security. They're vital to our economic competitiveness world wide, they're vital to our very way of life." The advisory committee says the budget for research and development against threats to critical infrastructure now stands at \$250 million, and recommends doubling those expenditures to \$500 million in 1999 and adding \$100 million a year to \$1 billion by 2004.

Powell says the research and development funding is scattered through different agencies, but is mainly in the National Security Agency, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, and the departments of Commerce

and Energy. Marsh said intentional or accidental damage to one aspect of the nation's infrastructure could domino and bring down other systems, adding, "We're not trying to alarm. In fact, there haven't been any serious attacks on our infrastructures. What we're saying is, let's take prudent actions to forestall this kind of crisis happening to us in the future."

New York Governor Vetoes Net Tax

New York Gov. George Pataki has vetoed a state bill that would have made Internet access services tax exempt, saying that while he still supports the Internet tax exemption, the bill passed by the Legislature was flawed. Reporting from Albany, New York, The Associated Press quoted Pataki as saying the measure wasn't as broad as an administrative ruling he had directed the state Department of Taxation and Finance to draw up earlier this year which would have exempted Internet access charges from sales and use taxes as well as the telecommunications excise tax.

The governor says the bill drawn up to codify the tax department ruling didn't exempt the Internet services from the telecommunications excise tax. AP notes New York currently doesn't tax Internet services and the governor's plan clarifies that they will not do so. The bill would have provided the first such Internet exemptions in the nation. Adds the wire service, "Of the states that have established Internet tax policies, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Tennessee and Texas are taxing Internet services and Nebraska has imposed a partial tax."

AP says the vetoed bill also didn't contain other key provisions of the tax department ruling such as a clarification that New York-based Internet providers which accept on-line advertising from companies outside of the state would not have to pay sales tax on the revenue from those ad sales. Also, the out-of-state companies would not pay additional New York taxes. "Providers had been worried by carrying advertisements for mail-order companies outside the state they would be subject to state sales tax," says AP. "The exemptions were intended to make New York more attractive to Internet providers."

IRS Vows Electronic Taxes By '99

The U.S. Internal Revenue Service, seeking to boost electronic filing of tax returns, plans to allow Americans to pay the taxes they owe that way, too, in 1999. Business writer Rob Wells of The Associated Press quotes acting Internal Revenue Service Commissioner Michael Dolan as saying taxpayers could permit the Automated Clearing House, a computerized bank payments system, to transfer money from their checking accounts to pay their tax bills. The IRS now allows direct deposit of tax refunds through a similar electronic payment system.

Wells notes the announcement came as the House Ways and Means oversight subcommittee held a hearing on ways to improve electronic filing of tax returns, which a recent IRS study commission said was a key element of reform for the tax collection agency.

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THE INTERNET GOES TO TELEVISION

A group of companies in the cable industry is ready to begin offering low-cost, high-speed Internet access to standard television sets with an ordinary set-top cable converter box, without the need for a PC or any additional equipment. For a fee of no more than \$12 a month, the service will at first be available only to subscribers in Philadelphia and St.Louis, with other cities added next year. The coalition of companies includes Worldgate Communications of Bensalem, Pennsylvania, along with backers such as Citicorp, Motorola, and a number of cable system operators

and major advertising agencies. Consultant Richard Doherty says: "Worldgate is Web TV and Microsoft's worst nightmare. They have the cheapest cost of infrastructure, and they can switch the Internet on for more Americans than anyone in the country." (New York Times 11 Sep 97)

AIRFARE WEB SITES WANT BUYERS, NOT LOOKERS

Expedia (owned by Microsoft), Travelocity (owned by American Airlines' parent company), and other Web sites that provide travel services are trying to make sure that visitors don't spend too much time looking at price quotes without eventually buying an airline ticket. A travel Web site must pay a fee every time it accesses an airline computer reservation system to obtain a price quote, so the site has a definite incentive to discourage pure window-shopping. Expedia says that "if a lot of people use the site without buying, it saps the system resources and can make it slower." (USA Today 10 Sep 97)

MICROSOFT BUYS STAKE IN TRANSLATION SOFTWARE COMPANY

Microsoft is buying 20% of Trados GmbH, a German-based maker of translation software, to increase its ability to make local versions of Microsoft software products which typically are shipped in more than 30 languages. Trados software does not perform machine translation but instead stores phrases and sentences after they have been translated, so that when similar or identical phrases recur the software automatically provides the translation. (San Jose Mercury News 10 Sep 97)

INTEGRATED CIRCUITS AND MUSICAL BIRTHDAY CARDS

Now 73 years old, Jack Kilby, who invented the integrated circuit at a Texas Instruments laboratory in 1958, marvels at how much impact his invention has had on the world. "I am continuously being surprised by some of the products coming onto the market. Some of them are fascinating... Musical Christmas and birthday cards, neckties that play tunes. I certainly couldn't have foreseen those." Looking back on the microchip revolution, Kilby says: "It didn't happen overnight. It has been the result of 40 years of hard work by tens of thousands of people." (Reuter 9 Sep 97)

SOFTWARE PIRACY

Vice President Al Gore told the Software Publishers Association that U.S. government departments and agencies have been ordered to crack down on pirated software within their offices. While piracy is a hot issue for software makers, the SPA doubts much pirated software is being used in government departments. (Toronto Globe & Mail 10 Sep 97 B12)

LOWER-PRICED PCs HIT THE "SWEET SPOT"

The new crop of bargain-basement PCs, priced at \$1,000 or lower is germinating a new market of buyers that would change the computer industry's economic model. Packard Bell says its two top-selling models both fall into this category, and that the lower-priced PCs now account for 30% of its retail sales, a figure that's representative of the industry as a whole. The rush to buy the new machines has boosted home-PC sales growth, and is predicted to push PC penetration of U.S. homes to 53% by 2001, according to estimates by Forrester Research. "That sweet spot of \$999 was something I couldn't resist," says one typical consumer. (Wall Street Journal 10 Sep 97)

SECURITY ISSUES ARE RISK-MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Consultant Ira Machebsky of Giga Information Group's Santa Clara office says that the issue of computer security is like the issue of automobile safety. "If I told you 100 years ago you'd ride around in a little steel box that could go 90 miles an hour, you'd have said that's crazy because it's dangerous. That's similar to the Internet. You accept the risks because the potential benefits carry the day. But it's all about risk management." (Information Week 8 Sep 97)

HIGH-LEVEL CRACKING IN CANADA

Computer Security Canada has opened an online library of computer security breaches that have occurred on the World Wide Web. The site contains examples of some of the most embarrassing Web security breaches that have occurred in government, the military, academia and industry. < <http://www.csci.ca/> > (Toronto Globe & Mail 10 Sep 97)

ELECTRONIC MONOGRAPHS ARE "GREAT ADVERTISING"

As university publishers struggle to find the right business model for offering scholarly documents online, some early innovators are finding that making a monograph available electronically can boost sales of hard copies. The National Academy Press has already put 1,700 of its books online, and is finding that the electronic versions of some books have boosted sales of the hard copy monographs -- often by two to three times the previous level. It's "great advertising," says the Press's director. The MIT Press is experiencing similar results: "For each of our electronic books, we've approximately doubled our sales. The plain fact is that no one is going to sit there and read a whole book online. And it costs money and time to download it." Meanwhile, the Association of American Publishers has set up a Web site to showcase its new Digital Object Identifier System, which identifies copyrighted material and links the user to the copyright owners. <http://www.doi.org/overview.html> (Chronicle of Higher Education 12 Sep 97)

DEFENDING THE RIGHT TO HYPERLINK

World Wide Web founder Tim Berners-Lee says he's disturbed by the recent lawsuit between Microsoft and Ticketmaster regarding Microsoft's unauthorized hyperlink to Ticketmaster's Web site. "The question, 'May I have permission to link to your site?' has got me really upset,' he says. The freedom to like from one site to another should be a given: "You and I have a right to discuss something," he says, regardless of whether that something wants to be discussed. "You don't have to ask someone's permission to talk about them." (Seattle Post-Intelligencer 10 Sep 97)

DIGITAL TO OFFER INTERNET SHOPPING SYSTEMS

Digital Equipment Corporation, in collaboration with Wells Fargo Bank, Microsoft, and VeriFone, will offer computers, software and services to retailers wanting to establish a store on the Internet. The system will make use of a Digital server running Microsoft's Storefront software, with Wells Fargo providing Internet credit card clearing services using software from VeriFone, a subsidiary of Hewlett-Packard. (Financial Times 10 Sep 97)

BELL CANADA, NETSCAPE TEAM UP ON ELECTRONIC COMMERCE

Bell Canada and Netscape Communications have formed a strategic partnership

to provide Internet services to businesses, including secure electronic data interchange for financial transactions and sales information analysis. A senior VP at Bell Canada says his company hopes to become a major player in the Automotive Network Exchange, the automobile industry's initiative to automate transactions between car makers and suppliers on the Internet, scheduled to be fully operation next year. (Wall Street Journal 10 Sep 97)

CHIPMAKERS FUND GOV'T RESEARCH ON NEXT-GENERATION CHIPS

Intel, Motorola and Advanced Micro Devices will spend \$250 million to fund a three-year R&D partnership aimed at developing extreme ultraviolet lithography technology. The Extreme Ultraviolet Lithography Limited Liability Co., as the partnership is called, will enlist the research efforts of the Livermore, Sandia and Berkeley national laboratories. Intel co-founder Gordon Moore says EUV technology is vital to the chip industry: "The semiconductor industry has a major problem to solve here. EUV has a lot going for it, that's where we are going to put our money... We are going to pursue the technology to the point where it can be realized as a system." (TechWeb 11 Sep 97)

MOTOROLA DISCONTINUES MAC

Motorola, in response to Apple's recent decision to put limits on Mac OS licensees, has decided to drop its Mac OS clone business. "This was a tough decision for all of us, but given Apple's position we had no choice," says a Motorola VP. "You can sue for divorce, but you can't sue for marriage." Motorola will continue to sell its StarMax clone up to the end of the year, but it cannot sell its StarMax Pro 6000, built on the CHRP (common reference hardware platform) architecture. The StarMax Pro 6000 was slated to ship in the first two weeks of this month, and was reputed to be the fastest Mac on the market; it was also able to run PC applications at the speed of a 166-MHz Pentium. Umax now remains the only company able to license the Mac OS for its clones. (InfoWorld Electric 11 Sep 97)

SUPER-SPEEDY IMAGE PROCESSING

Lockheed Martin Electronics & Missiles has spent 15 years developing a super-speedy chip for military image processing that now is moving into commercial use in the medical and database fields. Lockheed's chip sports 4,000 or more tiny circuit modules that can process 4,000 pixels in parallel, speeding up considerably time-consuming chores such as matching fingerprints in a database or screening mammograms. In addition, a new mathematical technique, called image algebra, manages to squeeze the number of instructions needed to process a pixel by 50%. (Business Week 15 Sep 97)

EDUCOM PROJECT TARGETS METADATA SPECS

Educom is teaming up with a coalition of academic, industry and government organizations to develop a metadata specification for materials used in higher education, corporate and government training programs, making them easier to find on the Web. The metadata specs provide a common vocabulary for searching and using various components that make up educational or training courseware. Educom is also making available a Java-based tool that will assist content developers in applying the metadata labels to their materials. The metadata specification development is part of Educom's Instructional Management Systems project.

BEFORE YOU KNOW IT, THERE'S MORE HISTORY TO KNOW

Suggesting that laptop computers and CD-ROMs, rather than books, might be a cheaper and better way of keeping learning materials current, the Texas State Board of Education chairman Jack Christie says: "We're talking big numbers there, and the price of this technology is coming to where it approaches that level. Why wait for the rest of the nation? Why wait for six, seven, eight years to update history?" (New York Times 12 Sep 97)

MICROSOFT INVESTS IN SPEECH RECOGNITION FIRM

Microsoft will invest \$45 million in Lernout & Hauspie Speech Products NV, which specializes in developing speech recognition technology. "Speech is a nascent technology. There aren't that many companies around that have a good core competence in this field. Combining the efforts of the two companies can only benefit the user in the end," says a Microsoft manager. Belgian-based L&H is one of the few speech recognition software firms to have developed products in as many as 20 different languages, and its technology can be found in many commercial applications, from translation software to on-board car navigation systems.

"INFORMATION AGE?". . .FOR WHOM?

Project Gutenberg founder Michael S. Hart says he is disturbed by copyright legislation in Congress which would extend all current copyrights by 20 years with no provision for maintaining the public domain. "To add 20 years to copyright creates a Landed Gentry of the Information Age," he says. The public domain is an inalienable right of the public which cannot be a commodity to be bought or sold, either by persons or by their government. "Copyright extension destroys both the concept and content of the public domain." (Time 15 Sep 97)

HIGH-TECH INVESTMENT

A study by the Conference Board of Canada found that tax breaks are not much a lure for high-tech companies looking to expand or relocate. Companies identified a skilled work force as the most important influence on where to relocate, with quality of life a distant second and the proximity of a local university third. A second study by KPMG confirmed the Conference Board conclusions that tax breaks play only a minor role in the creation of high-tech clusters. (Toronto Globe & Mail 11 Sep 97)

THE PROLIFERATION OF ISPS AND OTHER AMUSING STATISTICS

According to Boardwatch magazine, the number of Internet service providers in the U.S. and Canada has mushroomed from 1,447 in February 1996 to 4,133 in August 1997. Presumably, all those ISPs are staying busy handling the 2.7 trillion e-mail messages that will be sent this year, with e-mail numbers projected to rise to 6.9 trillion in 2000. None of this connectivity comes cheap: end users spent \$19 billion on Internet and intranet products last year, roughly \$1,000 for each of the 20 million individuals who consider the Internet "indispensible." (Internet Index #19, 10 Sep 97)

THE FATE OF INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDERS

A study by the Gartner Group market research firm suggests that as many as 90% of the approximately 4,500 Internet Service Providers in the United States may disappear over the next five years. One reason for

consolidation of service providers is price competition: with the largest ISPs offering flat-rate access for \$20 a month in the U.S., small operators have a difficult time making covering their costs and keeping their prices at the same levels. (Financial Times 15 Sep 97)

INTERNET KEEPS GROWING AND GROWING

The old phrase "growing like Topsy" may be replaced by "growing like the Internet." A survey by Christian Huitema of Bellcore indicates that the number of host computers grew from 14.7 million in September of 1996 to 26 million in September of 1997. The goal of the survey was to count centralized server computers, work stations, and each modem in the modem bank of Internet Service Providers. (New York Times 15 Sep 97)

WINDOWS 98 TIMETABLE

Microsoft announced that it will delay by several months the introduction next year of its newest Windows software program (Windows 98), so that it can coordinate release of two versions of the new product, one to upgrade Windows 3.1 and the other to upgrade Windows 95. Made jittery by the delay, investors caused Microsoft stock to drop \$7.25 on Monday.

(Washington Post 16 Sep 97)

ARE "INVISIBLE" TRADEMARKS UNFAIR COMPETITION?

Web site operators have found that a sure-fire way to lure visitors is to incorporate a popular brand name into "invisible" coding on their Web pages, thereby attracting the attention of the all-important Internet search

engines used by many Net surfers. Lawyers for Playboy Enterprises are suing Calvin Designer Label (no relation to Calvin Klein) for copyright infringement after it incorporated the words "Playboy" and "Playmate" into the coding on its adult-oriented Web sites. In another case, National Envirotech Group, a pipeline-reconstruction company, has agreed to delete mentions of a larger competitor, Insituform Technologies Inc., from the hidden coding on its Web site. Insituform's lawyer says the programming trick is "very harmful" to a company trying to attract customers on the Web, and "destroys the value of search engines as a way for people to find accurate information about companies." "Intercepting people on the information superhighway is like putting up big sign on a freeway that says Exxon, but that's not what you find once you get there," says a law professor at the University of San Francisco. (Wall Street Journal 15 Sep 97)

WALKING AWAY FROM THE MEDICARE COMPUTER PROJECT

The Clinton Administration has terminated the contract with GTE for a new computer system to handle Medicare because the current system (run by 72 private insurance companies around the country) proved to be so antiquated and complicated that they frustrated GTE's efforts. The Department of Health & Human Services has told GTE to "stop all work, make no further shipments, place no further orders and terminate all subcontracts." Medicare officials say they will now work on individual pieces of the system rather than attempting to do the entire project at once. (New York Times 16 Sep 97)

MICROSOFT JUMP-STARTS WEB TV

Microsoft has unveiled a new, souped-up version of its WebTV system for surfing the Net via the television. The company's new technology is based

on an innovative chip that combines the capabilities of a TV tuner, a cable modem and a high-speed PC modem all into one low-cost unit. The new boxes will enable WebTV to develop content that combines both television programming and Web sites in a seamless mix, using an improved program guide called Explore. "We intend to define mass-market media for the next century," says WebTV CEO Steve Perlman. Forrester Research predicts some 1 million Net-ready TVs will be in U.S. homes by 2000. (Business Week 22 Sep 97)

YEAR 2000 PROBLEM IS "REAL, SERIOUS, IMPORTANT"

Office of Management and Budget Administrator Sally Katzen says that the Clinton Administration has been aggressive in confronting the year 2000 problem, when computer programs that were coded with two-digit dates will not calculate correctly because they will not be able to distinguish 20th and 19th century dates: "I have said repeatedly that the issue is real, it's serious, it's important." OMB has decided against approving spending requests for computer technology from four agencies -- the Departments of Agriculture, Education, transportation and the Agency for International Development -- unless the purchases are related to fixing the 2000 problem. OMB says they have shown "insufficient evidence of progress." (AP 16 Sep 97)

PENTIUM II PRICES POISED TO PLUNGE (AGAIN)

Intel executives predict that, on top of drastic price cuts already made on its Pentium II chips, further reductions are in store. Last month, the price of Intel's 300-MHz Pentium II was slashed 57% to \$1,131, far more than the typical August cuts of 20% to 30%. Company officials now are saying that the prices of 300-MHz Pentium II-based PCs that now sell for \$3,500 could drop to less than \$2,000. "It wouldn't surprise me to see that within the next six months," says Intel's Pentium II market director. (Investor's Business Daily 16 Sep 97)

IBM, COMPUSA DISCOVER JUST-IN-TIME PCS

IBM is moving to just-in-time manufacturing and electronic ordering in an effort to compete with direct-sales PC marketers, reduce costly inventory stockpiles, and woo corporate customers. As part of its Advanced Fulfillment Initiative, IBM is authorizing a few of its large dealers to use its PC factories to assemble customized computers made from IBM components and ship them directly to the buyers. While dealers have been doing some assembly work on their own since 1995, the new strategy will help speed up computer deliveries by eliminating the time it was taking IBM to ship partly assembled PCs to dealer locations. The company is also initiating a SystemXtra service program for corporate buyers that, among other things, allows them to upgrade to more powerful computers after 24 months. (Wall Street Journal 15 Sep 97) Meanwhile, CompUSA is starting its own custom-built PC brand, with prices ranging from \$699 to \$3,999. The computers will be available through its retail stores, on its Web site, over a toll-free line, and through its corporate field-sales force. "There's a lot of people who want built-to-order computers," says ComUSA's CEO. "If we don't have it, they're going to buy it from somebody else." (Wall Street Journal 16 Sep 97)

SEGA, MICROSOFT TO TEAM UP ON HIGH-POWERED VIDEO GAME

A Japanese newspaper reports that Sega Enterprises and Microsoft are collaborating on a 128-bit home video game machine. An official agreement likely will be signed next month, say sources. (St. Petersburg Times 15

Sep 97)

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ELECTRONIC ENTERTAINMENT EXPO (E3)
RETURNS TO LOS ANGELES IN 1999

Interactive Entertainment Industry Center Seen as Natural for Annual Focal Point of Global Industry

LOS ANGELES -- SEPTEMBER 17, 1997 -- The Electronic Entertainment Exposition (E3 Expo), the world's largest and most prestigious interactive entertainment trade event, will return to Los Angeles May 13 to 15, 1999 to launch a five-year run, said the show's owner, the Interactive Digital Software Association (IDSA) and the Los Angeles Convention and Visitors Bureau today.

E3 will return to the Los Angeles Convention Center after a two-year engagement at the Georgia World Congress Center (G.W.C.C.) in Atlanta. The 1998 E3 will be held at the G.W.C.C. from May 28 to 30, 1998 and early sales are extremely strong reports show management.

"E3 and L.A. are a natural combination: L.A. is the entertainment capital of the world and our industry is one of the most dynamic entertainment mediums available today," said Doug Lowenstein, president of the IDSA. "With the West Coast being the nexus of the global interactive entertainment and multimedia community, L.A. is uniquely accessible and affordable for our exhibitors and software developers, and is also an attractive destination for many of our retail attendees whose support is crucial to E3's success."

E3 was held in Los Angeles in 1995 and 1996. In 1997, the IDSA moved the show to Atlanta to accommodate the growing demand for exhibit space. Since that decision was made, the Los Angeles Convention Center (L.A.C.C.) has undergone an expansion permitting the show's return. The 1999 E3 Expo will occupy the entire L.A.C.C., covering approximately 536,000 net square feet of exhibit space, making it one of the largest shows at the facility.

"Atlanta has been a terrific home for the E3 show and we are grateful to the city and the Georgia World Congress Center for their support and commitment to its success. At the same time, our industry is closely tied to the West Coast and a return engagement in Los Angeles is in the best interest of all the show's constituencies," said Larry Probst, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Electronic Arts, and Chairman of the IDSA Board of Directors.

"Congratulations to E3 for saying 'yes' to Los Angeles," said City of Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan. "As the entertainment capital of the world, the city of angels is proud to welcome E3 back to its birthplace."

With E3 home again, the message is clear: Los Angeles is the address of what's new and what's next for entertainment technology. As the hub of innovation and creativity, we are proud to have E3 as a partner in shaping the global economy for the 21st century."

"We never lost sight that this convention could return to its birthplace and made certain E3 would be welcomed back by the city and its dynamic entertainment industry," said George Kirkland, president of the L.A. Convention and Visitors Bureau. "Today we celebrate E3's return to Los Angeles -- especially its five-year commitment to the community."

The Interactive Digital Software Association (IDSA) is the only U.S. association exclusively dedicated to serving the business and public affairs interests of companies that publish video and computer games for video consoles (such as Nintendo 64, Sega Saturn, and Sony PlayStation), personal computers, and the Internet. The Association's members include the world's leading interactive entertainment software publishers, representing more than 80 percent of the U.S. market. In addition to presenting E3, the IDSA serves as a leading source of industry information and survey data. The IDSA also conducts a worldwide anti-piracy program and works with the U.S. government at all levels on policy issues such as copyright protection and Internet regulation.

E3 is operated for the IDSA by IDG World Expo and IDG Expo Management Company. IDG World Expo is a subsidiary of International Data Group, Inc., the world's leading IT media, research and exposition company. Founded in 1964, IDG had 1996 revenues of \$1.7 billion and now has more than 8,500 employees worldwide. IDG Expo Management Company is a premium provider of information events which shape the agenda of the Information Technology business.

Jason's Jive

Jason Sereno, STR Staff
jsereno@streport.com

Nintendo NewsWire STR Spotlight

What Is the 64DD?

To many, the 64DD is still a mystery. N64.com takes a look at the mysterious disk-based add-on

Nintendo announced in 1995 that it was hard at work on an add-on for its upcoming Project Reality, the code name for Nintendo 64. The add-on would supplement cartridge-based games with limitless possibilities, new inventive ways of publishing games, and a cheaper solution to cartridges. Well, Nintendo didn't say all of this outrightly, but the 64DD, or what was initially termed the Bulky Drive, came to be a kind of solution peripheral that would make Role-Playing Games, among other kinds of games, far more do-able on the Nintendo 64 system.

The year 1995 seems like a long time ago, now. Many journalists have spent the better part of their lives trying (in 1996-1997) to pry out some kind of hard facts about the 64DD, which Nintendo has been purposely vague about. There have been leaks here and there about modems and Internet play, various games, how much the peripheral would cost, and finally, when, or better yet -- if - the peripheral would arrive.

But now, supposedly, at the annual November Shoshinkai show (or what's now called the Nintendo World Show) in Japan, a Nintendo-only developers show, the world will actually see 64DD games in the works for the first time. The brave new technology will have arrived, and Nintendo will debut four games with it, Earthbound 64 (RPG), Mario Paint 64 (a specialized creative/painting program), Sim City 2000 (sim), Pocket Monsters 64 (virtual pet/evolution). Theoretically, other developers will show their own 64DD titles, but it's likely that the smart ones will wait to see what Nintendo has done, and then strategize their own 64DD future.

What Is It?

The 64DD (64-megabyte disk drive) is a hardware unit that fits snugly under the Nintendo 64. If you check the bottom of your N64, you'll see a removable slot called "Ext." This is where the 64DD will fit into your Nintendo 64. The 64DD is a magnetic drive-based device that uses media units very similar to Zip Drive disks. A simplified comparison is to see them as gigantic floppy disks, holding 64 Megabytes of data each. These disks are not CD-ROMs (Compact Disks -Read Only Memory), and won't play CDs, like the Saturn and PlayStation.

What Will It Do?

Developers to make games that use both media formats, cartridges and disks. So, for instance, if you're Midway and want to make a football game. You make a game that's graphically huge and also want to update it each six months. You make a cartridge game that also requires a disk. The disk may hold the graphics data (like player's games, team colors, team stats, new players, new trades, etc.), while the cart may hold the basic game structure and engine. In six months, Midway can replace the disk with another one that holds all the information for the new season, and sell it for less than cartridge, and which will work with that very cartridge you initially purchased. In this way, the game is constantly being updated and renewed. The same holds true for other games, like RPGs. You can load in new adventures or worlds, or even new characters, for instance. But developers can also just make 64DD disk games, and skip the cartridge altogether. So they have three choices for development: straight carts, disk and cart, or straight disk.

The other big asset of the 64DD disk is that it is readable and writeable, so in other words, it's a two-way medium. CD-ROMs (remember that ROM means Read Only Memory) can't perform this function. So, for instance, if you're a RPG gamer and your character is walking through the forest and you drop a

few cookie crumbles to find your way back, you can turn off your game and come back to the game and they'll still be there, and maybe your footprints will still be there, too. Monsters you killed could be there and their rotting corpses could still be decaying. In essence, your game, once you start playing it, will be completely different than any one else's in the world. With the flexibility of the 64DD, and more importantly, the rewritability of disks, your 64DD-compatible cart games will really become far more valuable than ever before. The 64DD could very well become the most revolutionary gaming device of the 20th century.

Modem? Did You Say Modem?

The other, more mysterious part of the 64DD is that a modem is supposed to be used with it. Wow! You might say, and wow, indeed, except that what speed modem? Will the 64DD have a modem built in? Will the 64DD use the Internet or a specific Nintendo gaming network? The questions are almost endless. The answers, however, fit on a very short little list.

Officially, Nintendo had denied a modem for at least one year and a half. And then Hiroshi Yamauchi, the chairman of Nintendo Co. Ltd (Nintendo Japan), just blurted out amazing news, most likely bringing heart attacks to at least half of the company's marketing and PR staffs, and sending chills down the vertebrae of Nintendo's own staff, from the bottom to the top of the chain. Yamauchi said, in no uncertain terms, that the 64DD would use a modem. He did not indicate, however, whether that modem would be built-in. Most likely, if the 64DD does use one, the modem will be built in.

Howard Lincoln, Nintendo of America Chairman, spoke at Nintendo's Pre-E3 news briefing as a clarification. "Mister Yamauchi indicated that there would be a modem inclusion, so I think that, as far as we are concerned, there will (be a modem), in the 64DD."

What does this mean? Again, the most we can do is speculate, but with the modem comes multiplayer gaming. And that's where the fun begins. Nintendo 64 already has four built-in ports, so imagine a game that enables multiplayer action across the Internet with four or more players. Hmm... .

When Will It Arrive? And for How Much?

First in Japan

Nintendo officially announced this last spring that the 64DD will first arrive in Japan in March 1998. The system will arrive with four games at launch Earthbound 64 (RPG), Mario Paint 64 (a specialized creative/painting program), Sim City 2000 (sim), Pocket Monsters 64 (virtual pet/evolution), and is supposed to cost anywhere from \$199 to \$99, or the equivalent in Yen. A Japanese news magazine reported the cost would be equivalent \$149, and another has reported that it would cost \$99. There has been no definitive price set for it -- yet. But we know the 64DD will cost less than the Nintendo 64, so count on it costing less than \$199, no matter what.

Second in the North America

Nintendo's official word on the 64DD in the U.S. is so vague, people's faces usually crinkle up in frustration and despair: "The official word is that Nintendo's 64DD is coming out in 1998. No games have been announced yet, and no firm date has been disclosed." But Nintendo has failed at getting a fix on the 64DD, and we here at N64.com believe that the 64DD might not arrive in the U.S. in 1998, and possibly never even arrive in the U.S. at all. Last year at Shoshinkai, Perrin Kaplan told IGN reporters that the 64DD will arrive by the end of 1997. The launch date for the 64DD in Japan has already been moved back at least twice. And now Nintendo says the

64DD will arrive in North America sometime in 1998, possibly revealed at the June Electronic Entertainment Expo in Atlanta, Georgia. But will it really?

Why Not CD-ROMs?

Nintendo has always said that cartridges are the best way to bring a game to life on videogame consoles. Third-party developers have almost unanimously disagreed, especially after learning of the inexpensive production costs and higher profit margins of CD-ROMs, and many were reluctant to make Nintendo 64 games ever. Electronic Arts turned around when Nintendo worked a deal with it to bring all of EA's biggest sports titles to Nintendo 64. That was a major coup for Nintendo, especially since EA had previously said it wouldn't make Nintendo 64 games. Many developers, however, are very interested in making games for the 64DD. Why? First, 64DD disks are just that, disks, and there is likely to be a much smaller upfront cost and high profit margins than for carts. Those are the two biggest reasons. They are followed by the big abilities to update the games, and to better estimate how many should initially be ordered, so that the developer doesn't get burned by ordering too many or too few. But why not CD-ROMs?

There is a story behind Nintendo's love of cartridges, and basically, it all comes down to what medium Nintendo felt most comfortable with. Nintendo burned its bridges with Sony when it blew up the CD-ROM drive deal for the Super NES (what was then to become known as the PlayStation), and has never really looked back. The executives at Nintendo also probably felt better making games on a medium they already knew the mechanics of, that is to say, with which they already had a successful history.

But Nintendo has only ever really said that cartridges had benefits that CD-ROMs didn't, and while many gamers somehow believed this (qualities like fast loading games and durability), most developers, executives, and knowledgeable tech heads simply chuckled. The simple fact is that CD-ROMs have much more storage space, are easier to mass produce, provide a business model that is far more forgiving -- and provides a far bigger profit margin -- than cartridges will ever. Even *Zelda 64*, which will hold 32 megabytes on one single cartridge, which is the most any commercial cartridge ever held, simply doesn't compare to a standard 650 megabyte CD-ROM. So, again, why hasn't Nintendo just given into using CD-ROMs? Pride has as much to do with it as anything. Sega and Sony use CD-ROMs and Nintendo wanted to show them up with the old stand-by, the cartridge.

The Gap Narrows: Pros and Cons

What's so special about Nintendo's infamous 64DD? What separates this add-on device from the 32Xs and Sega CDs of the industry, if anything?

Unlike so many failed peripherals and add-ons, the 64DD doesn't merely offer more of the same. It takes a step into a new direction -- one virtually unexplored in the home videogaming community: Writability.

The ability to store mass amounts of data on the writable drive opens new doors for developers and players alike. We're not talking about simple save-game features here, either, though that is easily possible, too. No, imagine add-on missions to games, extra levels, new weapons or characters, storylines and worlds. Theoretically, with the use of the 64DD, it would be possible for Nintendo to distribute monthly add-ons or updates to existing games. Replay value would jump to new heights.

More Room

Because the 64DD also upgrades the Nintendo 64 with 64 MBs of much needed

data-storage, games are likely to be bigger and more detailed. Incidentally, the biggest Nintendo 64 cartridge is currently *Zelda 64*, which is 32 MBs. The 64DD offers twice that, plus the ability to store data. This means more textures, more sound, and more worlds.

Real-Time Clock

The internal real-time clock is always ticking. Play a game at night and upon returning in the morning, eight hours will have passed in the game. Enough time for a village to be burned down, or for characters to regain health while resting, or an enemy to sneak up behind players for a surprise attack. Welcome to the real world.

Enter The Modem

Sega has released its share of modems for its consoles, but without the benefit of writability. 64DD owners, presumably, will not only be able to connect to a network a play against other players, but will be able to download add-ons, upgrades, cheats and tweaks. It's even possible that Nintendo will incorporate some messaging capabilities and/or web browsing features. With the option of writing to disk its all up for grabs.

In a nutshell the 64DD takes a giant step in closing the gap between videogame console and PC. The one benefit PC owners have always had over videogame console fanatics is the fact that in the PC lies more options -- like writability and modem technology. The 64DD, from a gamers standpoint, is the first healthy alternative to the PC.

The First Four Games

Earthbound 64 (Mother 3)

Taking full advantage of the 64DD, *Earthbound 64* offers players a huge world tuned with the RPG gamer in mind. The internal clock of the 64DD has been utilized to incorporate a real-time experience, where anything a player does can affect gameplay to create a truly individual fantasy.

Players do battle in a land where magic collides with technology and corruption. Dark atmospheres, lush graphics and a brutal storyline make this game the key title for debuting the 64DD.

Mario Paint 64

Do you remember the 'game' Super Mario Paint for the Super NES? Now, add in the ability to use enhanced graphics, sound, and possibly even video, to create amazing multimedia documents. This isn't so much of a game as it is a super enhanced creative tool that allows you to create cool looking scenes. There will probably be tons of library graphics and sounds already installed for those who need a little push. It's believed that *Creator*, a game that showed dinosaurs and cool looking creatures rolling around, was in essence, swallowed up by *Mario Paint 64*. We're looking forward to seeing what is shown at Shoshinkai in November.

Pocket Monsters 64

First of all, don't get any weird ideas about the game's title. *Pocket Monsters 64* originally started out as a card game in Japan (and still is a highly successful one) and then made the jump into Gameboy land. Nintendo is hoping to bring the successful formula to Nintendo 64 (via 64DD) in a big way. But its first 64DD *Pocket Monsters* game will be an evolution-based virtual pet game. Think *Tamagotchi* and then make it complicated and beautifully rendered in videogame format using Nintendo's amazing graphics engine. There is also another *Pocket Monsters* game, which will come out next year sometime. This is more like the Gameboy game. The object is to capture monsters and use them to your advantage. Whether or not the 64DD

will add new elements to gameplay like customizing options, monster interaction or the ability to send the monstrosities to a painful death while laughing uncontrollably is up for grabs, but we're betting there will be a lot to this game.

Sim City 2000

Who hasn't heard of Sim City before? The game is wildly popular for its unique style and addictive gameplay. For those of you out there who have managed to miss this game (have you heard of Quake?), the point behind it is relatively simple: Players build a city from scratch and must keep it flourishing. Of course, it isn't as easy as it sounds. There are riots, natural disasters, and even alien invasions to worry about. The 64DD version of the game will no doubt take advantage of the real-time internal clock and memory features. Imagine a city that doesn't shut down when you turn the power off. It's always running -- just like reality.

64DD Specs

Physical Dimensions/Weight:

- 10.2" x 7.5" x 3.1"
- 3.53 lbs

System:

- Magnetic Disk Storage Medium
- Error Correction Support
- Utilizes N64 console for data processing
- Real-time Clock
- Developer ROM
- Contains data files to assist developers (sound bytes)
- 4" front loading disk feed
- 4 megabyte RAM expansion
- Installed in console Memory Expansion slot

Benchmarks:

- .75 ms seek time
- .79 MB/sec data transfer rate
- "Burst Access" Streams

Disk Physical Dimensions:

- 3.98" x 4.06" x .4"

Games/Disks:

- High Density, Double-Sided
- 64 MB total capacity
- Read/Write capable
- Dynamic writable space
- 1-38 MB writable

File Format for STReport

All articles submitted to STReport for publication must be sent in the following format. Please use the format requested. Any files received that do not conform will not be used. The article must be in an importable word processor format for Word 6.0 and/or Word Perfect 7.. The margins are .05" left and 1.0" Monospaced fonts are not to be used. Please use proportional fonting only and at Twelve (12) points.

- No Indenting on any paragraphs!!
- No Indenting of any lines or "special gimmickery"
- No underlining!
- Columns shall be achieved through the use of tabs only. Or, columns in Word or Word Perfect format. Do NOT, under any circumstances, use the space bar.
- Most of all.. PLEASE! No ASCII "ART"!!
- There is no limits as to size, articles may be split into two if lengthy
- Actual Artwork should be in GIF, PCX, JPG, TIF, BMP, WMF file formats
- Artwork (pictures, graphs, charts, etc.)should be sent along with the article separately
- Please use a single font only in an article. TTF New Times Roman 12pt. is preferred. (VERY Strong Hint)

If there are any questions please use either E-Mail or call. On another note. the ASCII version of STReport is fast approaching the "end of the line" As the major Online Services move away from ASCII.. So shall STReport. All in the name of progress and improved readability. The amount of reader mail expressing a preference for our Adobe PDF enhanced issue is running approximately 15 to 1 over the ASCII edition. I might add however, the requests for our issues to be done in HTML far outnumber both PDF and ascii. HTML is now under consideration. We'll keep you posted. Besides, STReport will not be caught in the old, worn out "downward compatibility dodge" we must move forward.

However, if the ASCII readership remains as high, rest assured. ASCII will stay. Right now, since STReport is offered on a number of closed major corporate Intranets as "required" Monday Morning reading.. Our ascii readers have nothing to worry themselves about. It looks like it is here to stay.

Many grateful thanks in advance for your enthusiastic co-operation and input.

Ralph F. Mariano, Editor
rmariano@streport.com
STReport International Online Magazine

Classics & Gaming Section
Editor Dana P. Jacobson
dpj@streport.com

>From the Atari Editor's Desk

"Saying it like it is!"

Wow, what a week it's been! After moving into our new house three weeks ago, I returned to work this past week. I don't know which is worse: getting settled-in the new house or being back to work after being gone for two weeks! The house is coming along, slowly. Everyone tells me that this is normal, but my wife and I don't seem to have the patience - we want to be settled now! <grin> This weekend I hope to get her computer area/"office" set up so she can resume her writing, etc. Then to resume finishing off my area by getting some more shelves up and perhaps adding another bookshelf of two. We'll get there, someday. BTW, just a reminder that my BBS, Toad Hall, has a new number: (978) 670-5896. We hope to see new and old members online there - the activity is starting to pick up again now that the dust is starting to settle.

It's good to be back in the thick of things Atari, though. You feel kind of lost being unconnected to the online community for awhile. I still have a "stack" of unanswered e-mail to finish up, and a few other projects left incomplete during the move. One thing that I have found since I've been back online is that Atari support on CompuServe has been adopted by the Computer Club (GO CLUB) Forum. The folks there have added message forums for both the 8-bit and 16-bit Atari computers; files databases are reported to either be ported over from the Atari Forums, or started anew shortly. The Computer Club Forum is essentially a forum for "orphaned" computers - we'll fit right in with that crowd! <g> It's comforting to know that Atari users will still have a home on CompuServe. And don't forget the Atari Forum on Delphi!

Well, time to finish up this week's issue and get started on one of many ongoing projects at the house! I gotta admit, it's a rewarding process and I'm having fun - even with the occasional bits of frustration mixed in for good measure!

Until next time...

POPwatch 2.30 released

POPwatch is a POP3 mailbox tool for use with STiK and Oasis1, Oasis2, and NEWSie.

Version 2.30 is now available from my web site (see .sig). Changes since 2.22 are:

- ' New 'Reject Message' option to send a 'Failure' DSN to try and ward off junk email. Creates a REJECT.LOG file. See POPWATCH.TXT for more details.
- ' Keyboard shortcuts should now work on keyboards other than UK ones.

- Sequence of OK, Cancel buttons changed to conform to Atari Compendium standards.
- All LOG files are now placed in a new folder called \LOGS\ and all TMP files are now placed in a new folder called \TMP\
- Internal bug fix. Now allocates 60bytes for real name *not* 60 words.

Gaming Section

PSX's 'Power Price'! "OddWorld"!
"ShipWreck"! "G-Police"!
And much more!

>From the Editor's Controller - Playin' it like it is!

It wasn't that long ago (a year?) that Nintendo released the N64. Not only was it to be another nail in the coffin for the Jaguar, but it was supposed to dramatically bode doom for the PlayStation (Sega Saturn and 3DO were already starting to fade along with the Jaguar). People kept saying that the N64 was going to be THE game machine - that nothing was going to be able to stop its success. Just the fact that it was a Nintendo product would mean zillions of sales and unprecedeted success. Apparently, Nintendo must have got some pages from Atari's [non]action business plan and adapted it as its own! Nintendo failed to learn from recent history: you cannot depend on past success stories and "name recognition" to successfully sell a product and become/remain the market leader!

You rarely hear about the N64 these days! Everywhere I go, every commercial I see, every ad on the television - it's all PlayStation! Sony has done a terrific job with their machine. Heck, I may leave my Jaguar packed-up and get myself a PlayStation! Well, maybe not yet; I still have some unfinished business to take care of with some of my Jaguar games - I have to beat some of them to achieve some more satisfaction. And there are still a few games that I haven't played yet that I want to play. But, I am finally getting around to some serious consideration of a "new" game console. When I do, it will be a Playstation, not that "N" thing!

Until next time...

Industry News STR Game Console NewsFile - The Latest Gaming News!

PlayStation Establishes "Power Price" for Select Titles

FOSTER CITY, CALIF. (Sept. 16) BUSINESS WIRE - Sept. 16, 1997 - Sony Computer Entertainment America announced today the formation of a "Power Price" line-up for five strategic new PlayStation software titles.

Carrying a MSRP of no more than \$39.95, with many retailers already advertising the first "Power Price" title -- NFL GameDay '98 -- at \$34.95, these five PlayStation games will be among the most affordable of any new "next generation" videogame software. The Power Price lineup further demonstrates the consumer benefits of the PlayStation's CD-based format: Huge variety of games and great value for money.

The five leading "Power Price" titles are NFL GameDay '98 (available now), Crash Bandicoot 2: Cortex Strikes Back, Bushido Blade, Parappa The Rapper and Intelligent Qube.

"The key selling points for PlayStation are the depth and breadth of the game library combined with entertainment value," said Kaz Hirai, chief operating officer, Sony Computer Entertainment America. "Simply put, the PlayStation's CD-based software offers consumers enriched and engaging entertainment in a cost effective medium."

The five titles in this new pricing tier all are "segment openers," game titles that can broaden the demographic of the PlayStation user base. Specifically: With its revolutionary graphics, NFL GameDay '98 will attract sports fans to video games for the first time; Crash Bandicoot 2: Cortex Strikes Back, has youth appeal and takes the action/platform genre to a new level with an inimitably "PlayStation" style; Intelligent Qube and Parappa The Rapper, a sophisticated 3D puzzle game and an entirely new genre, a music-based video game that redefine and broaden out to new categories; and, Bushido Blade which adds a new sense of depth, subtlety and strategy to the fighting genre.

"The PlayStation business model was structured to provide great games at a great value to our consumers," said Andrew House, vice president, marketing, Sony Computer Entertainment America. "Providing a \$35 'Power Price' on select titles is something that only the PlayStation can offer and is designed to lower the entry point for an even broader base of consumers."

Currently the "Power Price" pricing will be limited to the five aforementioned titles.

Arcade Action and Maritime Mayhem Set Sail in Shipwreckers!

FOSTER CITY, CALIF. (Sept. 3) BUSINESS WIRE - Sept. 3, 1997 - The game that was hailed as an oasis of originality at E3 -- Overboard! - hit stormy waters in the form of a copyright snafu and is sailing once again into smooth seas with a new name -- Shipwreckers!(TM) But panic not, shipmates, because the "maritime mayhem" gameplay of this isometric action title for PlayStation(TM) game console and PC remains the same, only the name has changed. Shipwreckers! is expected at retail outlets nationwide the end of October for the PlayStation and early November for PC CD-ROM systems.

Shipwreckers! is a smorgasbord of ship-to-ship combat, platform-style puzzling, high-seas havoc and sea-faring exploration. It's a pirate-themed adventure with a Jules Verne-style twist, as your ship can turn into an airship, blast ground-to-air missiles as bomb-dropping parrots and travel uncharted waters filled with giant lobsters, aquatic dragons and many other fantastical creatures of the imagination.

In an ocean of "me-too" games, Shipwreckers! is a renegade original packed with zany humor, cerebral gameplay and ship wreckin' fun for gamers of all ages. Players will captain a galleon on a mission to rid the world of the infamous Blowfleet, a pirate of great cunning and power. Along the way the player will destroy various enemy strongholds, ports and shipyards while building their own fleet of strangely enhanced ships with various add-ons (for example, ships can morph into Jules Verne-style airships in this swashbuckling extravaganza).

The game's top-down perspective 3D world creates convincing environmental dynamics, where ships will be affected by the wind and sea conditions. Players travel the high-seas of five distinctly themed regions, including the Caribbean (naturally), the Middle East and the icy waters of the Arctic, and each of the five regions contains three individual levels and a formidable level-boss.

Ships' captains can look forward to a formidable on-board armory, with the inevitable cannon balls, mines and depth charges essential to maritime warfare (plus a few unexpected treats, including lightning bolts and flame-throwers). There are secret bays and coves to be discovered, plus a two-player co-operative mode that allows two shipmates to explore specially adapted multi-player levels.

Developed in-house by Psygnosis Ltd., Liverpool, Shipwreckers! is a fantastical swashbuckle'em-up game that combines arcade shooter gameplay with puzzle solving, strategic and exploratory elements. The beautifully created nautical environments (complete with transparent seas, swimming with whales, dolphins and sea-monsters) combined with gameplay-enhancing micro-climate weather conditions will make Shipwreckers! a must-play title for any gamer who has ever dreamed of sailing out on a pirate ship.

THQ Races Onto New Course With "Ray Tracers" for PlayStation

CALABASAS, CALIF. (Aug. 27) BUSINESS WIRE - Aug. 27, 1997 - THQ Inc. (Nasdaq/NMS:THQI) Wednesday announced that it intends to publish and distribute the unique 3-D combat racing game, "Ray Tracers," in the United States in the first quarter of 1998. The game, which takes on the exhilarating dimension of ramming and exploding cars for points, is being developed by Taito Corp. for the Sony PlayStation.

In "Ray Tracers," players speed through six courses, including sewers, underground tunnels, treacherous canyons and grassy retreats, crashing into any vehicle that gets in their way. While building up points, gamers must also race through tricky courses, saving enough time to beat clever bosses waiting at every turn.

"THQ is exploding into the car-racing genre with a new twist on a very popular genre," said Brian Farrell, president and CEO, THQ. "With the unique racing-for-points feature, THQ is giving the enormous racing fan base a new dimension to the game, increasing the replay value and sending players screaming through six challenging courses."

"We are thrilled to be working with a company like THQ in bringing this combat driving game to the huge installed base of hungry PlayStation fans nationwide," said Seizo Matsutaka, general manager, TG Division, Taito Corp. "The addictive racing for time and points aspects, combined with the beautiful graphics and levels of difficulty, makes 'Ray Tracers' an adrenaline-rush gaming experience."

World-Wide Launch of G Police This Fall

FOSTER CITY, CALIF. (Sept. 16) BUSINESS WIRE - Sept. 16, 1997 - Psygnosis is gearing up for a spectacular world-wide launch of G Police with hard-hitting campaigns driven from all of Psygnosis' eight publishing territories this October. A triple A title for both the PlayStation game console and PC CD-ROM systems, G Police has all the elements for success: advanced technology, spectacular graphics, addictive game-play and an attentive development and publishing parent. G Police will be available at

retail outlets October 14 for the PlayStation and October 21 for the PC at an estimated street price of \$49.95.

Psygnosis is investing 2.5 million dollars behind G Police domestically with similar investments by all other territories. Campaigns include everything from TV and national print placements to wide scale demo distribution; an editorial event featuring a fleet of helicopters, and co-promotions with such trend-setting apparel and watch companies as Diesel and Casio. G Police will be marketed by Psygnosis US, French, German, Scandinavian, Spanish, Australian, and Japanese offices for world-wide distribution.

Developed internally by Psygnosis, G Police offers the adrenaline thrills of flying a futuristic helicopter into and through a dazzling cityscape while maintaining law and order with all the big guns and pyrotechnics at your fingertips. The target market for G Police is primarily males ages 18-28 on the PlayStation and early adopters for 3D accelerated technology.

John Golden, director of marketing, said, "There's a lot of power in uniting the publishing divisions. The G Police message is strong and simple, it's good against evil, a maverick cop taking on corruption. By generating the same message and images around the globe we're building momentum and tremendous equity in the brand."

The shining steel 'G.P.' logo and sleek 3D rendered Havok helicopter will emblazon a large variety of communication mediums. Psygnosis publishing divisions will share key POP and promotional items and package art will follow similar guidelines.

In the US, G Police debuted at E3 (The Electronic Entertainment Expo in Atlanta, GA) on June 19 to acclaim. Previously selected journalists were flown to the UK headquarters to meet the development team and take an early peek. A nationwide retail campaign kicked off in May with the US marketing and sales team visiting retailers to roll out the fall programs. These will include: national and cable TV broadcast advertising with placements on the Fox, MTV, ESPN, ESPN2 networks, Sci-Fi Channel and other stations from October through December, 1997; a wide scale print advertising campaign including spread and teaser pages in multiple enthusiast publications. Retailers are selecting from 4-color standees, posters, static cling decals, oversized and 'coming soon' boxes, customized promotional give-aways, videos, and in-store demos in addition to advertisements in their circulars, direct mail pieces and holiday catalogs.

Nintendo's Operating Profit to Surge in 1st Half

TOKYO, Sept. 17 (Kyodo) -- Nintendo Co. is expected to post a 3.4-fold jump in unconsolidated operating profit in the first half of fiscal 1997 from a year earlier mainly due to brisk sales of its hand-held Game Boy computer game, a business daily reported Wednesday. Operating profit is expected to come to 48 billion yen for the April-September period, 5 billion yen more than initially projected, the Nihon Keizai Shimbun said.

Pretax profit is forecast to rise 67% to nearly 50 billion yen on the assumption that the exchange rate is 120 yen to the dollar at the end of September, the paper said. Because many of Nintendo's assets are based in foreign currencies, a fluctuation of 1 yen to the dollar can alter pretax profits by 2.5 to 3 billion yen, it said. Sales are now projected to be up 54% to 200 billion yen, 20 billion yen more than initial projections, it said.

For the current fiscal year ending next March 31, Nintendo's operating

profit is expected to double from the previous year to 115 billion yen on a 24% sales increase to 430 billion yen on the assumption that the dollar is traded at 120 yen on average over the October-March second half of the year, the paper said. Annual pretax profit is projected to rise 20% to 122 billion yen, the newspaper said.

ONLINE WEEKLY STReport OnLine

The wires are a hummin'!

PEOPLE... ARE TALKING

Compiled by Joe Mirando
jmirando@streport.com

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. I'd like to start off this week's column with a bit of good news. The Computer Club Forum on CompuServe (GO CLUB) is going to be providing support for Atari 8 and 16 bit computers. The message bases are already in place, and the file library will be setup as soon as the legalities are figured out and management (I'm talking about the really big-wigs here, not the Forum management) are satisfied that they've got their pink, fleshy butts covered. This may take a while since CompuServe's legal counsel is currently busy with this AOL takeover silliness.

I've been hanging around 'The Club' since I heard that there was a possibility that we'd be moving there since I was curious to see just what kind of folks were around. I can gladly report that the folks there, both forum management and staff, are nice people. I guess that since they are in approximately the same boat as we are, they understand the preference of what the rest of the computer world considers 'inferior' machines. Most of them have no idea of what an ST, TT, or Falcon is, but they understand that these are the computers we use and wish to keep on using for a while yet. So if you've got a CIS account and are looking for a place to find programs and information, The Club is the place to look.

I'm quite pleased to be able to say that the addition of The Club adds nicely to the support that we'll be providing in this column. Added to posts from Delphi and the UseNet, there should be no shortage of help for those of us trying to find it. I think that, to begin with, we'll try alternating posts from the three; Delphi one week, CIS the next, and the UseNet the week after that. Since we all know that this is a shrinking platform and that there is less and less information available, this should provide us with a good amount of helpful information each week. UseNet coverage is interesting because can currently I use either Delphi or CompuServe to gather the posts. This means that I'm actually using only 2 services to gather three sources of information. If the overlay file for CAB (the Atari Web Browser) ever gets changed to use 'cookies' (which allow a service such as CIS or Delphi to quickly and easily check membership status), I will then be able to access all three sources of info from only one service. Delphi has seen this trend coming and has provided access in this manner for some time now. You can access Delphi

through an Internet Service Provider, which means that you don't have to worry about finding a local access number. I have a very good friend who lives in Costa Rica that had wanted access to a service such as CompuServe or Delphi, but had only one local access number to CompuServe, and it was only 9600 baud.

Upon hearing that you could access Delphi through an ISP, he quickly joined the service and has been busily participating in conversations there. While I've been conversing with him in email for quite a while, there's something different about posting online. It is very comfortable because it's more like a conversation than correspondence. While there are several other folks that have made the same decision as this fellow, his appearance comes to the front of my mind because I'm so used to our email correspondence. If you're interested in this kind of interaction and have access to the World Wide Web, then go to <http://www.delphi.com> and follow the computer section through to The Atari Advantage. Non-members can participate in the message base and in chats (try Tuesday nights at 10:00 EST).

Well, let's see... we'll start with the Delphi Atari Advantage message base this week. Let's take a look...

From Delphi's Atari Advantage

George Iken from the Huston Atari COnputer Enthusiasts club (HACE) tells us that he's...

"Currently typing in through Flash II and Tymnet, but I looked at Delphi from the Internet (ie from Netscape browser and an ISP). I found you couldn't access your email that way (Delphi Tech support responded to a query, saying you had to come in textwise) Now if I got NetTerm, could I use that through my ISP and come into Delphi via text that way?"

Gordie Meyer tells George:

"Actually, I access my email via the net all the time. It just isn't part of the Delphi website, per se. What you have to do is set up an email client program to access it. You can use Netscape Mail (or whatever they're calling it now) easily as it's part of the Netscape bundle of software. Or you can use something like Eudora (which I use) or Pegasus (which I think is still freeware)."

Everything on the net is a separate bit. Email, newsgroups, ftp, the Web, IRC, and so on. Each one needs its own specialized client software, which gives everyone a lot of choice. Whether that's a good thing or a bad thing is left up to your own interpretation.
<g>

However, using NetTerm, you can telnet into Delphi, and for all intents and purposes, it's the same as if you accessed via Sprintnet or Tymnet. Well, if your ISP supports 8-bit file transfers, that is. Mine does and I can use zmodem to upload and download files. With luck, yours will too."

George asks Gordie:

"So what do you set the mail server (in Netscape mail) to point at (the SMTP or pop3 server to have it talk to)? Right now it points to my ISP mail server, so I would have to change that info to point at Delphi I guess. But to what address?"

Mark "Folkstone" tells George:

"As far as I know, you SEND to: SMTP.Delphi.com and RECIEVE from:
POP.Delphi.com"

Mark is correct. As a matter of fact, all you need to define is delphi.com and somebody's (I'm not sure if it is your software or Delphi's) decides whether SMTP or POP is used. I've been doing this for a while now, and it works out quite well.

Alejandro Aguilar (from Costa Rica) posts this as a test:

"Hi Joe, I am here via Internet."

While this may not seem like an important post to most people, to me it was sort of the equivalent of Alexander Graham Bell's "Mr. Watson, come here... I want you". For me it marks the beginning of a new era where communication is easier and more fun. I tell Ale:

"Good to see you here. Have you signed up or are you just visiting?

Either way, technology is wonderful, isn't it? Take a look around and tell us what you think!"

Ale tells me:

"I signed up last week via the Internet. I have rights to participate in the forums, but only that. I'll be stopping by to see this message base from time to time, so don't be surprised if I answer late (as with this message).

This forum is very good... (congratulations Dana)."

Dana Jacobson jumps in and tells Ale:

"Thanks for the compliments, but they should be directed to all of the users here rather than to me. The folks here are responsible for the atmosphere; I'm just a hired hand! <real big="" grin="">"

Another of our friends (Ale's and mine), Rob Rasmussen, tells Alejandro: "Hi Ale! I'm here too. I joined a few weeks ago, accessing Delphi from the net like you. I have found GEmulator to be truely awesome, and have installed several Atari programs into the virtual drives."

>From here, it gets a little messy. Kind of like an old-fashioned telephone party line, with several people joining the conversation.

Michael Burkley posts to Rob Rasmussen:

"I am typing on GEMulator right now. It's not as nice as my STe or TT, but it will do! May I ask why you are using ST virtual drives with GEMulator? They used to be needed but are no longer needed. I just use the Clone harddrive as an Atari drive, running programs and copying files wherever I wish."

Alejandro tells Michael:

"I helped Rob in the set-up of the GEmulator96. The problem is that the version that Rob has is used with MagiC. With this set-up, the PC drives are not seeing good with the MagiC file selector. So we seem better off to use virtual drives (and are more secure than using the PC real ones)."

For my part, I am in the process of buying MagiC-PC. After tests, I find it better in terms of running and drive support (you can use virtual and real drives at the same time).

Regards from Costa Rica!"

Rob tells Michael:

"I have always enjoyed your columns in the online magazines, and hope you keep it up!

As for why I use GEmulator's virtual drives, besides what Ale explained, this is because it seemed easier for me at this point. In the beginning all I could access from was drive A, because I kept getting error messages (the dreaded "Access Denied") when I tried to load/save a file from my PC's hard drive. Occasionally I was able to load a file, like a text file on PC drive C into EditPlus in GEmulator, but the directory of drive C looked very strange from the MagiC desktop or from the item selector. So I was thrilled to learn how to make the virtual drives (thanks Ale!) because I no longer was limited to floppy-only access. And it made it more like my beloved 1040 ST which along with my Falcon got zapped by lightning a year ago (since replaced with a CLab Mk-X). I am open to new ways of using GEmulator though and curious to learn newer ways of using it. An advantage of the way you mentioned is being able to access any files, like text files that had been written in Notepad and not stored in a virtual drive. Frequently I wish for this, since in this case I have to copy the file from the PC drive to a floppy to then be able to access it in GEmulator. I have to choose "Windows mode" or "Atari mode" though, so for now I'm staying with the latter."

Now, folks, even if you are not interested in emulating an ST on a PC, follow these next posts... it's one of the subjects that really ticks me off.

Rob tells Alejandro:

"I looked for PaCifiST, and can find only the pre-release v0.47 to download, and it says I also need v0.46 which I can't find. I noticed on the Toad message board that some people think it works better than GEmulator, so I am at least anxious to see what it's like. Does it include a desktop, multitasking, 256 colors? I wish I could get more than just ST high rez in my GEmulator96."

I haven't gotten MagiC 5 yet either, but I saw that Toad has it. I should call them to see if there is an upgrade available, and hopefully it won't be a pain to re-install it with GEmulator again. <grin>"

On the subject of PaCifiST, Michael Burkley tells Alejandro:

"I've heard that it is very good. I'm a bit hesitant to try it myself because of all the piracy of commercial programs that is associated with it. There are lots of links to 1000's of pirated programs through the home site of the emulator. No one associated with those links thinks that anything is wrong with it either. They are all "helping the platform to survive." Yeah, sure."

Alejandro tells Michael:

"In fact I am using PaCifiST (up to version 0.46 - I still haven't tried the new pre-release). It works very good. It is made for compatibility, not for speed (in fact is about 60-75% GEmulator speed. PaCifiST by itself is almost freewarwelle (the author encourages to send some money for his efforts). Yes, you are right, some people use the PaCifiST "wave" to promote "legal" piracy (at

least they call it so). But you can use the emulator with confidence. One of the big things about PacifIST is the capability of using protected disk converted to .ST files (disk images). There are some PC utils to make .ST and .MSA files from standard disks. Some protected disk can be converted, some can't. If someone could make an .ST file constructor for the ST maybe all the disks would work."

By the way, Michael, I am waiting your next column. As a Shareware and freeware collector, I am a fan of it. Let's promote anti-piracy..."

Greg Evans jumps in and tells Michael:

"I got a chill the first time I trekked through the PacifIST web sites seeing all thos programs available for download. Since I own Zany Golf I downloaded their image copy and sure enough it had a screen message saying "Cracked by....". I deleted the file even thoug I own the original. I did keep PacifIST and installed it on my PC at work. It looks useable to do development on it so I may take advantage of that. Most of the sites seem to be on Geocities server. Maybe a phone call or email can shut them all down."

Well folks, that's about it for this installment. Tune in again next week, same time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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STReport "YOUR INDEPENDENT NEWS SOURCE" September 19, 1997
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